

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2823

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL MUNICH

C O N F I D E N T I A L L E N I N G R A D 1 9 2 3

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR

SUBJ: CONSTITUTION DAY DEMONSTRATION

1. ABOUT 20 (TWENTY) DEMONSTRATORS HELD SHORT FIVE MINUTE CONSTITUTION DAY VIGIL AT PUSHKIN MONUMENT ON LENINGRAD'S SQUARE OF ARTS, DEC 5. VIGIL CONSISTED OF SILENT PAUSE FACING PUSHKIN STATUE. NO PLACARDS WERE EVIDENT AND NO SPEECHES WERE GIVEN. SQUARE WAS RINGED WITH KGB, MILITIA AND RED ARM BANDED PEOPLE'S MILITIA (DRUZHINNIKI). WHO SLOWLY BEGAN TO CLOSE IN ON DEMONSTRATORS ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL AT STATUE. THIS APPARENTLY CONVINCED DEMONSTRATORS BREAK OFF THEIR DEMONSTRATION AFTER ONLY SHORT VIGIL.

2. ONLY IDENTIFIED DEMONSTRATOR KNOWN TO US WAS YULIYA VOSNESENSKAYA, LENINGRAD POET, WHO ACCORDING OUR SOURCES WAS RECENTLY ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH SLOGAN PAINTINGS HERE LAST FALL. VOSNESENSKAYA REPORTEDLY HAD JUST BEEN RELEASED BY KGB BUT INFORMED THAT CHARGES AGAINST HER FOR SLOGAN INCIDENT WOULD NOT BE DROPPED BY PUBLIC PROSECUTOR. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, KGB ALSO TOLD HER THAT THEY WOULD APPROVE OF HER "EMIGRATION". TWO OTHER PERSONS ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH SLOGAN PAINTINGS REPORTEDLY ARE STILL BEING HELD BY AUTHORITIES.

3. IN RELATED DEVELOPMENT ANOTHER POET, VADIM FILIMONOV, HAS RECENTLY BEEN ARRESTED AND CHARGED UNDER ARTICLE 206 OF
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RSFSR CRIMINAL CODE WITH HOOLIGANISM. FILIMONOV WAS ONE OF ORGANIZERS OF LAST YEAR'S DISSIDENT DEMONSTRATION IN DECEMBER SQUARE ON DECEMBER 14 ANNIVERSARY OF DECEMBRISTS UPRISING.

4. COMMENT: AS FAR AS WE KNOW THERE HAS BEEN NO PREVIOUS RECORD OF CONSTITUTION DAY DEMONSTRATION IN LENINGRAD ALTHOUGH SUCH DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE BEEN TRADITION IN MOSCOW. THE FACT THAT THEY GOT AWAY WITH ALBEIT ABBREVIATED DEMONSTRATION WITHOUT BEING ARRESTED AND WITHOUT ANY VIOLENCE SHOULD CAUSE DISSIDENTS HERE TO TAKE HEART AND WE WOULD EXPECT THEM TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF UPCOMING DECEMBRISTS REVOLUTION ANNIVERSARY FOR FURTHER DEMONSTRATIONS. RECENT ACTIVITY MAY ALSO INDICATE THAT LENINGRAD DISSIDENTS LIKELY TO BECOME MORE ACTIVE IN CONNECTION WITH MONITORING CSCE VIOLATIONS HERE. AT SAME TIME, STRENGTH AND PROMPTNESS OF POLICE REACTION SHOULD BE CLEAR INDICATION DISSIDENTS OF CLOSENESS WITH WHICH THEY BEING MONITORED BY KGB (ESPECIALLY SINCE WE UNDERSTAND THAT DECISION TO DEMONSTRATE ONLY FIRNALLY DECIDED ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4) AND OF AUTHORITIES' DETERMINATION NOT TO LET PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS HERE REACH POINT OF REAL EFFECTIVENESS.

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